

March 9, 2007

Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

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Re: Proposed PA Dog Law Enforcement Regulations (7 PA CODE CHS. 21, 23, 25 and 27)

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Gentlemen:

We feel compelled to respectfully comment on the above-referenced proposed Dog Law Enforcement Regulations.

Perhaps the initial intension of these proposed regulations was to try to insure the humane and proper treatment of our companion dogs with regard to large commercial kennels and puppy mills in Pennsylvania, which is commendable. However, as dog fanciers actively involved with our local all-breed club and also our breed regional specialty club, we find it very distressing to see these proposed regulations lump hobby breeders and rescue folks into the same category with commercial kennels and puppy mills. "One size does NOT fit all."


The regulations as they now read will adversely affect the dedicated hobby breeder, conscientiously breeding one or two litters a year, inside their homes (where companion animals should be living), to try to improve the quality of their particular breed, thus being the caretaker of their specific breed, without regard to making a profit. They do it out of commitment to their breed's future and welfare. And the rescue folks will also be adversely affected as they rescue discarded dogs, taking them into their homes, evaluating and re-homing them, on a voluntary basis. They do not operate kennels but provide these services voluntarily in their homes, where companion animals should be living.

"One size does NOT fit all." Some areas of concern which are addressed in the proposed regulations that should not apply to the conscientious hobby breeder and dedicated rescue folk are:

- 26 Dogs Cumulative Per Year. Most hobby breeders keep a few dogs they show, and most grow old living in our homes, and they perhaps raise one or two litters a year, noting that many breeds give birth to 10-12 pups per litter, which easily would put the hobby breeder over the 26 dog limit and constitute a kennel and subject to these proposed regulations. These pups are raised inside the home, watched and fussed over as tiny babes and very importantly socialized with humans, until they are old enough to go to pet homes. If the hobby breeder has a stud dog, individual bitches are sent to the stud dog's home for a short period to be bred, and these visiting bitches would also add to the cumulative total.
- Floor Drains/Ventilation/Sanitizing of Walls. The hobby breeders and rescue folks cannot be expected to put floor drains in their kitchens and bedrooms and hose down their inside home walls where their dogs live and the puppies are whelped and reared and change the air supply to their homes to accommodate the regulations. Dogs are companion animals and live in the home.
- Restriction of Exercising Dogs on Grass. Exercising dogs on grass in their back yards is what suburban hobby breeders and rescue folks do, because the dogs are part of the family and the family recreates in the backyard. Grass is much better on the joints/bones of dogs as concrete does not "give" and is therefore detrimental to the dogs; and stones/gravel can very quickly be ingested by curious puppies (and dogs) which can cause intestinal blockage and death.

"One size Regulations does NOT fit all." These regulations must be very specific and totally clear and must specifically pertain to the irresponsible commercial kennels and puppy mills that raise companion dogs in kennels outside the home as a cash crop to be shipped in infancy to who knows where. Please reject the proposed regulations as is, and instruct the PA Department of Agriculture to modify them with input from the PA Federation of Dog Clubs and other legitimate entities whose paramount purpose is the care of our companion dogs and the hobby breeders and folks who are the caretakers of our breeds. Thank you for your kind consideration of public comment on these proposed regulations.

Sincerely,


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cc: PA Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement
Honorable Senator Michael W. Brubaker, Chair, PA Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Affairs
PA Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural